



**Testimony of the American Lung Association
in Connecticut in Support of Raised
Senate Bill No. 126 An Act Adding Wood Smoke
to the Public Health Nuisance Code and
Concerning Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces**

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Environment Committee
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Good morning Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and other Members of the Environment Committee. My name is Dawn Mays-Hardy and I serve as the Director of Health Promotion and Public Policy at the American Lung Association in Connecticut. The American Lung Association is a not-for-profit public health organization dedicated to fighting lung disease through research, education and sound public policy. I am here today to express strong support of the Raised Senate Bill No. 126, An Act Adding Wood Smoke to the Public Health Nuisance Code and Concerning Outdoor Wood Burning Furnaces.

First and foremost we stand as a voice for the people who are being harmed now by OWBs and who need your help. A seasonal ban on burning will bring some relief for families who have wood smoke entering their homes on a continual basis. However, there is an expanding body of scientific evidence that exposure to the kinds of particle pollution found in wood smoke is a serious lung health hazard at any time. Many of the components of wood smoke are the same as cigarette smoke and therefore breathing it is very dangerous and leads to a number of lung diseases, such as pneumonia and bronchitis.

Second, we urge you to take action now to prevent this problem from getting worse. We are deeply concerned about the potential for more OWB's to be installed. If new units are installed the Department of Environmental Protection must adopt performance standards similar to ones used in other states or recommended by Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM).

We want to be very clear that the ALACT does not believe that meeting emission standards, setbacks or stack height requirements is absolute assurance that an OWB will not become a

"public health nuisance". It is in these cases that the DEP must have the authority and be committed to act swiftly and deliberately to protect public health. Affected parties must be able to rely on the DEP, especially when local authorities cannot or will not act.

Adding wood smoke to the public health nuisance code is an extremely important measure and will strengthen the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) ability to respond to complaints and enforce violations. While local boards of health may already have statutory power under the nuisance statute, the State DEP must step in when and if the local boards do not or cannot respond.

We appreciate your on-going efforts to address a number of related problems caused by high emission outdoor wood burning furnaces or boilers (OWBs) and wood smoke in general. And like you, the American Lung Association is committed to finding solutions to these problems. We stand ready to assist the Committee in this task.

Thank you.

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